The Committee is to submit its recommendations within 45 days from 21-02-2006.

(c) No time frame hast>een fixed at present.

Telecom services in rural areas of Rajasthan

727. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes for providing telecom services in rural areas of Rajasthan;

(b) the telephone density in rural and urban areas in Rajasthan;

(c) whether the telephone density in rural areas is less than in urban areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the number of villages in Rajasthan where "wireless in local loop" services have been provided and the number of villages where no telecom facilities exist; and

(f) the steps taken to provide telecom facilities in those villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is supporting the provision of telecom facilities in rural areas of the country including in the State of Rajasthan. USOF has entered into agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and private service providers for providing following facilities in the rural areas of Rajasthan:

* Provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) by November, 2007 in 12,386 remaining unconnected eligible villages. This excludes villages having less than 100 population, lying in thick forest area/naxalite infested areas etc.
* Provision of Rural Community Phone (RCPs) by September, 2007 in 1,416 villages in Rajasthan service area with population of more than 2000 and not having a Public Call Office (PCO).
* Provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 203 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).

(b) to (d) The tele-density in rural and urban areas of Rajasthan as on 31-12-2005 is 1.56% and 30.58% respectively. Telecom service providers are not going for faster roll out in rural areas mainly because of commercial unviability of providing communication infrastructure in rural areas.

(e) As on 31-12-2005, 10,923 villages in Rajasthan have been provided with VPTs using Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology and 8,054 eligible villages remain to be provided with VPTs.

(f) As per terms and conditions of the agreement signed between USOF and BSNL, the balance 8,054 villages are to be provided with VPT facility progressively by November, 2007.

FDI in Information Technology

728. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated growth in FDI in manufacturing side of the Information Technology Sector; and

(b) the major equipment manufacturing units expected to be established in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The FDI inflow in the area of 'computer hardware' sector has increased from Rs. 7.35 Crores (2004) to Rs. 52 Crores (2005), recording a growth of about 600 per cent.

(b) As per the information currently available, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is expected from the following major equipment manufacturing units:

(i) Ericsson

(ii) LG

(iii) Nokia

(iv) Alcatel

(v) Samsung